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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Private Vets Boost Livestock Health

Veterinary field units are private businesses that provide livestock healthcare to rural Afghans



Photo: USAID/ASAP

VFU staff members treat a flock of sheep

Since the start of the project in late 2006, USAID-supported VFUs have generated more than \$12 million in income and administered approximately 30 million vaccinations and 18.9 million treatments to Afghanistan's livestock.

Afghanistan is an agrarian nation with more than 80 percent of its citizens living in rural areas and relying on livestock such as sheep, goats, cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, and chickens for food and income. The health of these living resources is essential for the survival of many Afghans, but rural Afghans often have limited access to veterinary services.

To fill the gap in livestock healthcare, USAID has established a network of veterinary field units (VFUs) across the nation. The VFUs are private businesses that provide preventative animal health services for rural communities. USAID has supported more than 550 such VFUs during the past four years with training, technical assistance, and equipment.

The VFUs are staffed by veterinarians, veterinary assistants, and/or paravets (community health workers for animals) who provide advice, cure diseases, and administer reliable and quality vaccines and medicines to livestock on a fee-for-service basis.

Zarwally, a graduate of the Faculty of Veterinary Science of Kabul University, now heads a VFU in Mohammad Agha District in his native Logar Province. He had been unemployed for five years after his graduation until he learned about the opportunities available with USAID's VFU network.

"For me, this was an opportunity to provide veterinary services for the villagers and residents of my district," said Zarwally. "I didn't have many clients in the beginning, but the number of clients has gradually increased."

Zarwally said that the income generated by his VFU allows him to support his family and put a portion aside for savings.

VFUs, like the one operated by Zarwally, are increasing the general health of livestock and controlling outbreaks of major livestock diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, anthrax, respiratory disease, internal parasites and mastitis.

"I am thankful that I have the opportunity to provide services for my community and can support my family," said Zarwally.